

Attachment B

Key Messages Heard About Vision Policy Strategies

As heard from MTC Commissioners, the Joint Policy Committee, partner agencies (including CMA board directors), MTC advisors and stakeholders.

Investments

General

- The needs of rural, urban, and suburban communities are different, and therefore the transportation solutions must be specially crafted to respond to varying needs.

Maintenance

- Maintaining our existing system is not a choice but an absolute.
- Deferring maintenance will yield higher maintenance costs in the longer-term.
- Because projected 25-year maintenance needs are much higher than past estimates, we must find new revenue sources to address increased maintenance costs.
- The California Transportation Commission should not siphon a third of SHOPP funds for the STIP.
- A nine-county regional property tax is worth pursuing to pay for transit maintenance costs, particularly for BART.
- BART and Muni have the largest maintenance deficits; other bus operators have found ways to address their maintenance needs.
- Don't forget about state highway maintenance costs. SHOPP and STIP are the only two ways to pay for the state highways. SHOPP only pays for 60 percent of maintenance costs.
- It often takes two to three fund sources to fund roadway maintenance. Traditional sources often only pay a portion of the costs. The challenge is how to find balance in funding strategies.
- Locals are putting lots of local sales tax dollars into the maintenance, and the public supports such investments. If we are to persuade the public to spend more for transportation, then we have to maintain our existing system and demonstrate that maintenance is our priority.

Expansion

- While it is important to maintain the system we have in place, we also need to make some investments in expansion too. We cannot forget the importance of system expansion where needed.
- In some counties, the infrastructure is not complete and expansion is needed in high growth areas.
- High-speed rail should be pursued, railroad rights-of-way needs should be addressed, and Resolution 3434 should support housing/jobs around transit stations.

Pricing & Affordability

General

- Pricing is trickier and more political than we think.
- Pricing is an enormous challenge. There are successful pricing examples such as London cordon pricing. Although we are not pioneers in this area, we would be incredibly unpopular for pursuing pricing; however we must forge ahead with pricing, particularly as a response to climate change.
- Pricing is one policy area that we barely have begun to scratch the surface. Congestion pricing will more appropriately price use and burden that a trip is placing on the system.
- Pricing holds the most promise for making major changes without having to raise vast amounts of money. More public education about the benefits of pricing is needed.
- Raising gas taxes may not be the answer. We have to move towards a VMT fee in lieu of gas tax, utilizing the technologies available and ready for GPS systems to impose VMT fees.

- MTC should pursue a congestion pricing study to determine if it is possible to implement now rather than the distant future.

Regional HOT Network

- What if there is no regional consensus behind a Regional HOT Network? Perhaps MTC should consider some sort of tiered agreement towards implementing HOT.
- Start with developing the HOV Network first and implement ITS strategies second – explain why we are creating a regional HOV system, rather than leading with pricing as the goal/solution.
- We must bite the bullet and initiate discussions about how to create a revenue stream for building our HOV system.
- Road pricing revenues are important; however, HOT pricing is on a much longer track.
- HOT lanes are the way to go; however, for those counties that devote their local sales tax measures towards HOT development toll revenues generated in a corridor should be invested back into that corridor.
- Perhaps we look at a corridor approach, looking at commute sheds, as the strategy to develop the HOT network. This way there is some understanding that the revenues generated are coming from a commute shed that spans multiple counties and the pooled revenues can help to provide benefits within that commute shed.

Pricing Parking

- Pricing parking is a very local issue.
- Pricing parking could yield new revenues that could be directed to the arts or free transportation.
- Station Area Plans grants should also cover parking pricing strategies. It is helpful for local communities to have model standards in place that can support a good TOD project that is subject to public opposition and lawsuits. There must be some regional advocacy efforts in place to support communities that are doing the right thing.

Affordability/Equity Issues

- Equity issues should be considered but should not halt the pursuit of pricing.
- Pricing discounts for low-income families implies that there is a method in place to identify who qualifies as low-income. A mobility management center could perform the function of determining low-income status via a database and then apply discounts accordingly.
- If we price, we must mitigate impacts on low-income groups. More study is needed.

Focused Growth

General

- ABAG is far too removed from the local decision-making process to effectively influence land use decisions.
- More discussion of open space and schools are needed.
- We need to address the issue of parking. As long as you have a parking place, you are going to drive.

PDAs

- PDAs are too abstract of a concept to sell to voters; specific projects that voters can relate to are much more effective in getting them to consider voting for a particular measure.
- We must monitor the performance and progress made within PDAs, and if there is little progress, we should adjust how much regional dollars are invested in these areas accordingly.
- Legislation should be pursued to up-zone PDAs.

- The need for mixed income and affordable housing must be considered as part of focused growth element. Bicycle and pedestrian access in focused growth areas must also be addressed to ensure people can indeed walk and bike within their community.

TLC/HIP & New Revenues

- TLC is highly effective in educating locals about focused growth, and we must continue to support this important program. TLC, however, may evolve to support FOCUS priority development areas.
- Due to strong regional consensus around focused growth, incentive programs like TLC/HIP continue to play an important role.
- New revenue sources must be aggressively pursued to support focused growth.
- Other agencies and developers – not only MTC – should bring money to the table to support focused growth.

Local Implementation

- Locals should be given choices of how to implement focused growth, and locals should decide on their own priorities.
- Locals would greatly benefit from having a “transit-hub ready” project, so they need support for preparing plans, environmental documents, general plan amendments, and entitlements that allow them to move into implementation. If good projects are implemented, it is important to advertise them as possible models for others.
- A community process driven by a bottoms-up approach will be a better indicator as to what is a livable community. The people living in that community are best suited to define what it is livable.

Technology

System Management

- We must implement IT in order to squeeze as much as we can from our existing system.
- Operating and maintaining system management must be given a high priority.
- Tech fixes can be put in place faster and cheaper compared to any expansion project.
- There is strong support for implementing the system management strategies identified in the Freeway Performance Initiative – we should implement these IT strategies within the next five years.
- Ramp metering has been implemented successfully in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties; how do we get the word out to other counties? More funding should go to ramp metering.
- IT equipment is often included in highway projects, but why doesn’t Caltrans not “turn” them on?
- FasTrak is a good solution to easing congestion on the Bay bridges; however, for those who are not FasTrak users, they are not realizing the pain of not having FasTrak.
- Creative incident management techniques have been deployed in Los Angeles, including accident investigation sites on freeways and aggressive tow truck program, to respond to incidents.

Air Quality/GHG Emissions

- Climate protection strategies should be engrained in whatever we do; we must do business differently.
- Credits should be given for those entities that are already doing their part to reduce GHG emissions?
- If we talking about technology changes, we should tap into nuclear energy as a fuel source.
- MTC should study how to reduce GHG emissions that would save money. These savings could go into incentives for PDAs and local streets and roads maintenance.
- It is imperative that we fund a public education program about climate change.

Individual Actions

- Individual actions are the epicenter of the vision – that is, individuals are the instigators of change, and they will determine if the pricing and focused growth strategies will ultimately work
- Programs like Safe Routes to School are important to facilitate changes in travel behavior.
- Public health impacts associated with driving must also be called out during the public education campaign.